



EASY KIDS' LUNCHES

FUN RECIPES, HEALTHY SNACKS, AND A+ TIPS



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star sandwiches

PREP TIME: 5 MINUTES | MAKES: 2 SANDWICHES

There's no doubt that PB & J has star status among kids. Our version encourages kids to dress up the classic sandwich by punching star shapes out of the bread.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ 2 slices white bread
- ☐ 2 slices whole wheat bread
- ☐ 1 ½-inch star cookie cutter
- ☐ Peanut butter and jelly

1. For each sandwich, use a star cookie cutter to cut two stars out of a slice of the white bread and two stars out of a slice of the whole wheat bread. Then fit the whole wheat stars into the star-shaped holes in the white bread and the white stars into the whole wheat bread.

2. Now the bread is ready for the peanut butter and jelly. Have your child use a table knife to smoothly spread on peanut butter and jelly, working slowly to avoid tearing the bread. Assemble the sandwiches, then wrap in plastic.



my own peanut butter

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | MAKES: 1 CUP

Pour the peanuts into the bowl of a food processor. Process until they are finely chopped. Add the vegetable oil one tablespoon at a time, processing until the peanut butter begins to form a ball. Add the salt and process until well combined. Transfer to a clean jar with a lid. Decorate a large white mailing label before affixing it to the jar. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks. If the oil separates from the peanut butter, stir before using.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ 2 cups unsalted dry-roasted peanuts
- ☐ 3 to 4 tablespoons vegetable oil
- ☐ ¼ teaspoon salt
- ☐ Food processor
- ☐ 16-ounce clean jar with lid
- ☐ Large mailing label



lunch ahoy!

PREP TIME: 12 MINUTES

This lunchtime fleet turns tuna salad into a treat that's sure to reel kids in. Fill a **veggie vessel** (we used halves of a pickling cucumber, plum tomato, and yellow pepper) with **tuna salad**. Push one end of a **carrot or celery-stick** mast into the salad and set a triangle sail of **pepper, lettuce, or cheese** next to it. For the full effect, serve the lunch on a blue plate scattered with **fish-shaped crackers**.

TIP: A dab of cream cheese can help adhere the sail to the mast.

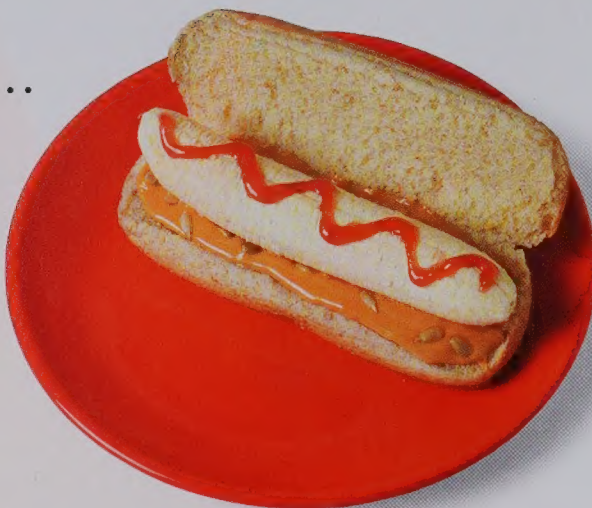
banana dog

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PREP TIME: 2 MINUTES

You won't find this fruity impostor at a ball game or backyard barbecue, but it sure makes a doggone wholesome "fast food" lunch. Simply spread a **whole-grain hot dog bun** with **peanut butter**, sprinkle with **wheat germ** or **sunflower seeds**, and top with a whole, peeled **banana** and a squiggle of **jam**. Add a side of milk to round out the meal.

VARIATION: For a Banana Burrito, substitute a tortilla for the bun.



mini flatbread pizza

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PREP TIME: 8 MINUTES | COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

Making this pizza-inspired lunch is as easy as pie! For each pizza, layer the following in order on a **mini flatbread** or **sandwich thin**: prepared **pesto sauce**, **shredded Parmesan cheese**, a **thin slice of tomato**, and **shredded mozzarella cheese**. Bake at 350° on a cookie sheet (or directly on the rack for a crispier crust) for 10 minutes.



pb & j pizza

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | SERVES: 1 - 2

For a quick lunch or after-school snack, invite your kids to assemble this no-cook "pizza." Like its cheesy cousin, this one can be customized with favorite toppings.

YOU WILL NEED

- ❑ 3 tablespoons peanut butter (creamy or crunchy)
- ❑ 1 whole pita bread (medium-size)
- ❑ Toppings, such as jelly, raisins, grated apples, sliced bananas, Cheerios, and peanuts

1. Spread the peanut butter "sauce" on the pita bread. Then top the pizza with jelly, raisins, Cheerios, grated apples, and/or banana slices. You can arrange the toppings randomly or in a pattern.

2. Help your older child use a pizza cutter to slice the pizza into wedges. Grip the pizza cutter handle firmly, apply slight pressure, and roll the blade steadily and in a straight line.



salad on a stick

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

Making a salad for lunch can be quick (and kid-friendly!) when you put it on a skewer. For a Greek version, toss **olives**, **cherry tomatoes**, and cubes of **feta cheese** with your favorite **vinaigrette**, then slide the ingredients onto **skewers**. Make Italian-style skewers by tossing **cherry tomatoes**, **mozzarella balls**, and **fresh basil leaves** with **olive oil**, **salt**, and **pepper**.

tuna fish sandwich

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | MAKES: 3 SANDWICHES

For a kid-friendly lunch with a protein punch, try this lighter version of the midday classic. You'll need circle- and heart-shaped cookie cutters (ours are 3 inches).

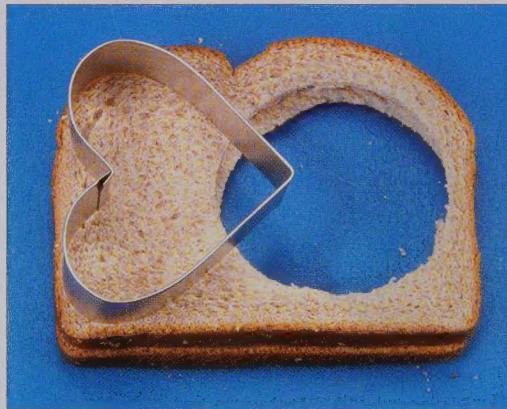
YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Bread
- ☐ 1 (5-ounce) can of tuna
- ☐ Salt and pepper to taste
- ☐ ½ teaspoon fresh squeezed lemon juice
- ☐ 1 teaspoon each fresh parsley and green onion, chopped
- ☐ Veggies to decorate

1. Stack two slices of bread and cut out the shapes as shown at right.

2. Drain the liquid from the tuna. In a bowl, mix together the tuna and all the ingredients, except the veggies, with a fork.

3. Put a third of the filling in each sandwich, then add the veggie eye and mouth (we used a pea, a carrot, and a red pepper).





crabby crabwich

PREP TIME: 12 MINUTES

Hungry kids will dig right into this tasty lunchtime fare.

Slit open the outside edge of a **croissant**, as shown, and stuff it with sandwich filling.* Tuck **six baby carrots** into the sides to form legs. Slide two ½-inch balls of **cream cheese** onto **toothpicks**, top each with a **black olive slice**, and stick them in place as shown. Snip off the tips of the croissant and slide a claw-shaped **red bell pepper** slice into each end. Finish the crab by attaching a **radish slice** smile with a dab of cream cheese.

* We used crab salad in our sandwich, but chicken or tuna salad, ham and cheese, and PB & J also make delicious fillers.

silly sandwiches

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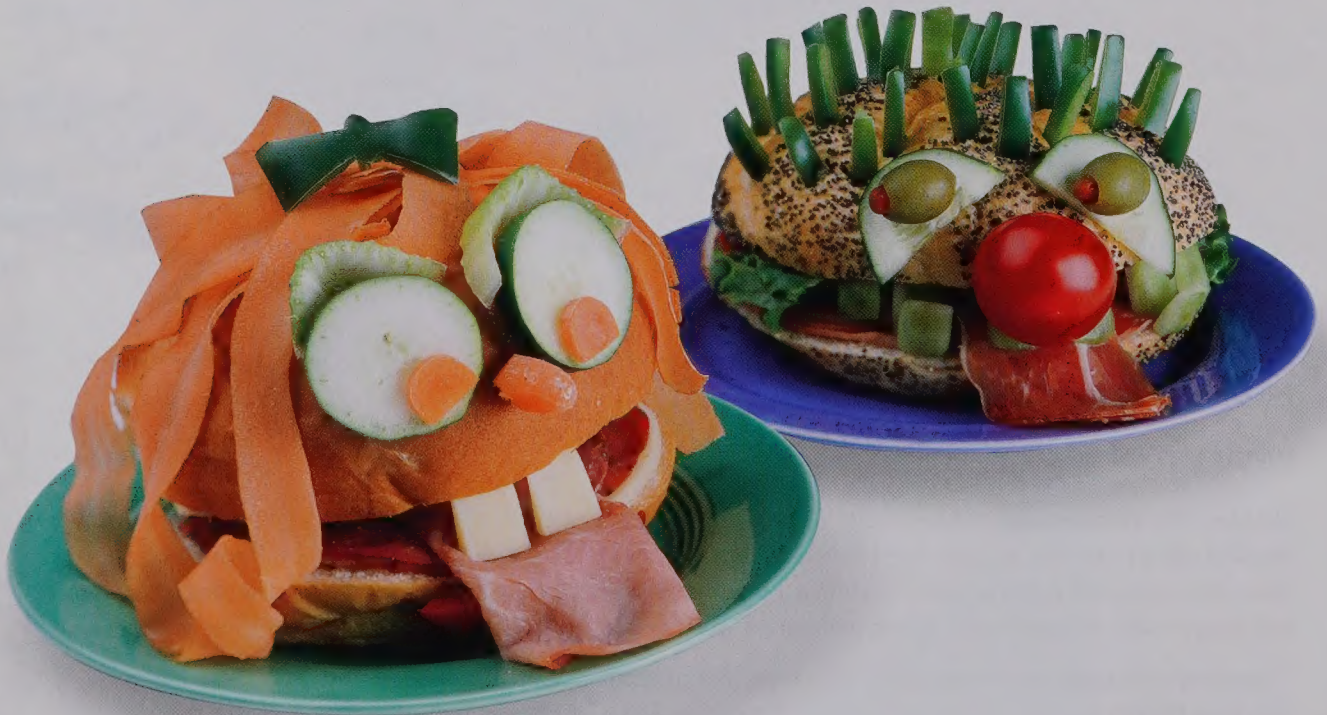
PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

Help your kids put together a lunch that has a lot of personality.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Sandwich roll
- ☐ Condiments, such as mustard, mayonnaise, or Italian dressing
- ☐ Cold cuts, such as roast beef, ham, turkey, and cheese
- ☐ Raw vegetables, such as cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes, olives, and green peppers
- ☐ Softened cream cheese

1. Spread your favorite condiment on the bottom half of a sandwich roll.
2. Add a slice of ham or another cold cut. Then fold a second slice of meat lengthwise so that it resembles a tongue and lay it across the bun with one end hanging over the edge, as shown.
3. Create a face on the bun top using sliced raw vegetables. Use softened cream cheese to adhere the veggies. (The veggies stick best if you first blot them dry with a paper towel.) Add a carrot or tomato nose with the help of a toothpick. You can even add a couple of cheese cube “teeth.”
4. Push bell pepper slices into the bun for a spiky hairdo, or adorn it with carrot curls made using a potato peeler.



pita rabbit

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

One look at this sweet, fluffy bunny lunch, and your child will hop right up to the table.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Pita bread
- ☐ Peanut butter
- ☐ Marshmallow fluff
- ☐ Red jam
- ☐ Pretzels

1. Separate a small pita bread into two circles by inserting a butter knife between the layers from the outer edge and then carefully cutting around the circumference. Use one circle for the bunny's face and cut the other into halves for the ears.

2. Arrange the pieces on the plate and spread with peanut butter and marshmallow fluff. On the side, gently swirl a bit of red jam into some marshmallow to create pink for the nose. Add two dollops of jam for eyes and pretzel sticks for whiskers.



pb & j blossom sandwiches

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

These cute sandwiches made with peanut butter and jelly (or cream cheese and jelly, or any other fillings) are perfect for parties, lunch boxes, or snacks.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Bread
- ☐ Peanut butter or cream cheese
- ☐ Jelly or jam
- ☐ Flower-shaped cookie cutter
- ☐ Water bottle cap

1. For each sandwich, cut two slices of bread into flower shapes with a cookie cutter.

2. Cut a hole in one of the slices by pressing a water bottle cap into the center.

3. Spread the peanut butter and jelly on the whole piece and place the slice with the hole on top.



assemble-at-school sub

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

To prevent soggy sandwiches, pack up the fixings for a sub and let your little chef make a fresh one at school.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Sandwich fillings, such as lettuce, black olives, onions, and cherry tomatoes
- ☐ Cheese, such as Provolone or Muenster
- ☐ Deli meat, such as salami, turkey, or ham
- ☐ Oblong sub roll or baguette section
- ☐ Italian dressing, mustard, or mayonnaise

1. Shred the lettuce, chop the olives, and slice the onions with a chef's knife (parents and older kids only). Wash and dry the cherry tomatoes. Line up the vegetables in rows in a sealable plastic container. Roll up the cheese and the meat and place in the container next to the veggies.

2. Pour the dressing into a small plastic container or gather packets of mustard or mayonnaise.

3. Pack the fillings, the dressing, a sub roll wrapped in plastic, and a plastic knife (for slicing the tomatoes and spreading the mustard or mayo) in a lunch box.

4. At school, your child can build a sub sandwich or just eat the fillings as an antipasto.



spiral sandwiches

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | SERVES: 2-4

Kids get a kick out of these elegant roll-ups that show off a food design inside. Give the young chefs lots of elbow room and tell them to take their time rolling it up.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ ½ cup cream cheese at room temperature
- ☐ 4 chives, 1 sprig of dill and/or 3 basil leaves (optional)
- ☐ 6 spinach leaves
- ☐ 2 large flour tortillas
- ☐ 1 tomato, seeded and sliced into thin rounds

1. Place the cream cheese in a small bowl. For herb cream cheese, use scissors to snip the herbs into tiny pieces, then mash them into the cream cheese.
2. Spread a little cream cheese on each of the spinach leaves, then spread the remainder in a thin layer onto one side of each tortilla. Place three tomato slices in a row down the middle. Top with the spinach leaves, cream cheese facing up.
3. Roll up each tortilla tightly into a log. Pinch the seams shut. Use a serrated knife to slowly slice each log crosswise into 5 or 6 pinwheel sandwiches.





blackboard cupcakes

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

These cupcakes earn top marks for sweetening even the most reluctant student's return to school.

1. Cover the cupcakes with yellow frosting and allow them to sit for an hour before decorating. Dab each red Skittle or M&M with a bit of green frosting for the apple's leaf, then set them aside.
2. Put a tablespoon or two of white frosting into a small plastic bag for piping. Cut a very small hole in a corner of the bag, twist the top of the bag closed, and secure it with a rubber band or twist tie. Piping the frosting gently out of the hole, write messages on the chocolate-covered graham crackers. Leave space at the bottom of the cookie, where it will be stuck into the cupcake.
3. Cut a groove in the cupcake's frosting with a knife, then fit a blackboard into the groove. Add one Skittle or M&M apple and a piece of Good & Plenty chalk, as shown.

YOU WILL NEED:

- Yellow, green, and white frosting
- Cupcakes
- Red Skittles or M&M's
- Small plastic bag
- Rubber band or twist tie
- Chocolate-covered graham crackers
- White Good & Plenty candies



school of fish

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

It won't take long to reel kids in for snack time with these sweet-and-salty goldfish. For each fish, slit one end of a **dried apricot** and insert the bottom of a **mini pretzel**. Pinch the apricot around the pretzel to hold it in place. For a fish eye, pipe on a small dot of **cream cheese** (a plastic sandwich bag with a corner snipped off works well for this) and then press a **mini chocolate chip**, tip down, into the cream cheese.

animal chips

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | BAKE TIME: 5-7 MINUTES

Here's a tasty, toasty snack that will satisfy animal-lovers large and small. These crunchy chips bake up in minutes and are low in fat, too. To make your own herd, use **animal-shaped cookie cutters** to cut shapes from a **large flour tortilla**. Arrange the animals on a baking sheet, lightly coat them with **cooking spray**, and sprinkle them with **salt**. Bake at 350° for 5 to 7 minutes, and they're ready for a dip in salsa or guacamole.



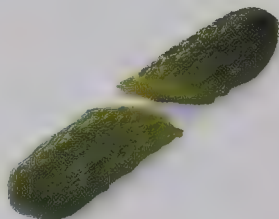
snail snack

PREP TIME: 12 MINUTES | MAKES: 4-6 PINWHEEL SANDWICHES

This silly-looking snack may appear to be moving at a snail's pace, but it goes together—and disappears—quick as a wink.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Mayonnaise or whipped cream cheese
- ☐ Large tortilla (square if possible)
- ☐ Lettuce or baby spinach
- ☐ Sliced deli meat of your choice
- ☐ Sliced cheese of your choice
- ☐ Gherkin pickles
- ☐ Chive stalks



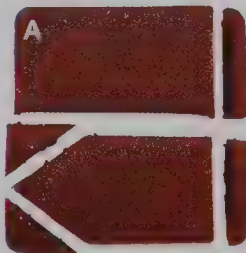
1. If necessary, trim the rounded edges of the tortilla to make it square, then spread on a thin layer of the mayo or cream cheese.
2. Layer on the lettuce or baby spinach, then the meat and cheese, and roll it up tightly.
3. With the seam on the bottom, slice the tortilla into 2-inch-wide pinwheels. For the snail's heads, cut a pickle in half at an angle. Poke two small holes in the uncut end and stick pieces of chive with knots at one end in each for antennae.
4. Slip each pickle half under the edge of a pinwheel, securing them together with a toothpick, if necessary.

pencil cake

PREP TIME (AFTER BROWNIE BAKE): 15 MINUTES

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ 8-inch square pan of brownies, uncut
- ☐ 1½ cups white frosting
- ☐ Yellow and pink food coloring
- ☐ ¼ cup chocolate frosting
- ☐ Sandwich bag



1. Turn the cooled pan of brownies upside down and tap on the bottom to remove the brownie square. Cut it as shown (A) and arrange the two largest pieces into a pencil shape (B).
2. Cover the pointed end with white frosting. Tint 1 cup of frosting yellow, then spread it over the middle of the cake. Next, tint ½ cup pink for the eraser. Pipe on a chocolate frosting zigzag and pencil point using a sandwich bag with the corner snipped off. For an added effect, set the pencil on a piece of foam core board decorated to look like lined paper and pipe on a chocolate frosting message.

chew on your pencil

PREP TIME 10 MINUTES

These noteworthy snacks are sure to earn high marks as a treat after school or at the next classroom gathering. For each pencil, cut off one end of a cheese stick so that it's flat. Use a paring knife or apple corer to cut a $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch circle out of the bologna. Dab one end of the circle into the mustard, then attach it to the flat end of the cheese stick. Snap off the end of a Bugle so that its edges are even, and gently press it onto the other end of the cheese stick. Slide half a raisin onto the Bugle for the pencil tip, and you've got a snack that's just write!

YOU WILL NEED

- Cheese sticks
- $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch-thick slice of bologna
- Mustard
- Bugles corn chip snacks
- Raisins



candy apple cookie pops

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES | MAKES: 18 COOKIE POPS

These cute cookie pops are sure to put happy faces on your child's classmates at the next school celebration.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ 9 pretzel sticks
- ☐ Green fruit chew candies (we used Jolly Rancher)
- ☐ 18 round sandwich cookies (we used Oreos)
- ☐ 18 craft sticks
- ☐ 14 ounce bag red, meltable candy wafers
- ☐ Brown mini M&M's
- ☐ Vanilla frosting

1. Snap the tips of 9 pretzel sticks into $\frac{1}{2}$ - to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch pieces and set them aside. Flatten several green fruit chew candies and with clean scissors snip them into 18 leaves, as shown. Shape the leftover candy into 18 mouths and set all the pieces aside.

2. Cover a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Insert a craft stick into 18 round sandwich cookies by gently pressing each cookie between your fingers as you slide in the stick.

3. Melt the bag of red meltable candy wafers in a microwave-safe container according to the package directions (do not overcook the wafers; the heat will cause the cookies to fall off the sticks when you dip them). Working in batches of five pops or less, dip each cookie pop into the melted candy until well coated, then transfer it to the parchment paper. Alternately, you can spoon and spread the candy onto the pops. If needed, reheat the candy wafers as you work. While the candy coating is still wet, add a pretzel stem and a fruit chew mouth and leaf to each pop as shown.

4. Let the treats cool completely, then finish them by attaching brown mini M&M eyes with vanilla frosting.



fruit snack stack

PREP TIME: 6 MINUTES

Give your child's afterschool snack an appealing twist with a homemade hybrid. Slice two pieces of fruit that are relatively the same size and alternately stack the pieces, as shown.



sticks and stones

PREP TIME: 6 MINUTES | BAKE TIME: ABOUT 30 MINUTES | MAKES: ABOUT 7 CUPS

This crunchy, lunch-box-friendly snack mix is sweetened with fruit juice and brown sugar.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ 4 tablespoons butter
- ☐ ¼ cup frozen orange or apple juice concentrate
- ☐ ¼ cup brown sugar
- ☐ 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ☐ 2 cups pretzel sticks
- ☐ 3 cups oatmeal cereal squares
(we used Quaker Oatmeal Squares)
- ☐ 1½ cups whole almonds
- ☐ 1 cup raisins or dried cranberries

1. Heat the oven to 300°. Place the butter, juice concentrate, and sugar in a large microwave-safe bowl and microwave on high for 45 seconds to melt the butter. Stir in the cinnamon.

2. Spread the oatmeal squares, pretzels, and almonds in a single layer on a baking sheet. Toss the pieces with the melted-butter mixture to coat. Bake the mix, stirring the pieces every 10 minutes, until the mixture is dry to the touch and the nuts are lightly toasted—about 30 minutes.

3. Remove the pan from the oven, then stir in the dried fruit. Let the mix cool completely before storing it in an airtight container.



cheesy chums

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

Here's an easy way to dress up an after-school snack: Use a sharp knife (an adult's job) to trim the wax covering from a [mini Babybel cheese round](#) as shown, then add facial features with small pieces of [red bell pepper](#), [scallions](#), [carrot](#), and [olives](#). Serve with a short stack of [whole wheat crackers](#).



carrot patches

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

Here's a treat hungry students are sure to dig: baby carrots planted in tasty dip. For each patch, spoon about 3 tablespoons of **hummus** into a **small plastic cup** (ours were 3-ounce size). Shortly before you're ready to deliver the snack to the classroom, gather four **baby carrots** for each cup and use a **toothpick** to poke a hole in the top of each one. Insert a sprig of **curly parsley** into each hole. Then plant the carrots in the hummus. For a special presentation, you can place the cups in **mini terra-cotta pots** that the kids can take home and use to start veggie seedlings of their own.



eat your worms

PREP TIME (AFTER CRISPY TREAT PREP): 20 MINUTES

Worms are delicious—when they're our bookworms made from crispy rice and marshmallows.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Crispy rice cereal treats
- ☐ Butter
- ☐ Fruit leather
- ☐ Plastic wrap
- ☐ Googly eyes
- ☐ Pipe cleaner

1. Whip up a batch of crispy rice cereal treats, using your favorite recipe.
2. Using buttery hands, mold the rice mixture into worm shapes (ours are about 5 inches long).
3. Add three strips of fruit leather to each worm, securing the overlapping ends of each strip with a dot of water.
4. Wrap the worms in plastic wrap, then add two googly eyes.
5. Loop a pipe cleaner around each worm's neck and twist it together at the top. Curl the ends into antennae.



hoot owl treats

PREP TIME: 30 MINUTES | CHILL TIMES: 2 HOURS/1 HOUR | BAKE TIME: 10-12 MINUTES | MAKES: 20 COOKIES

Kids get a hoot out of these sweet owl treats. They're great to make for a bake sale or school party.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ ¾ cup softened butter
- ☐ ½ cup brown sugar
- ☐ ½ cup sugar
- ☐ 1 egg
- ☐ 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ☐ 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- ☐ ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ☐ ½ teaspoon salt
- ☐ 1½ ounces baking chocolate, melted
- ☐ Chocolate chips
- ☐ Whole roasted cashews



1. In a mixing bowl, cream the butter and sugars. Beat in the egg and vanilla extract. In a separate bowl, combine the all-purpose flour, baking soda, and salt. Add the dry mixture to the liquid mixture and beat until combined.
2. Now put a third of the dough into another bowl and mix in the melted chocolate. Wrap both doughs in waxed paper and chill them for 2 hours.
3. With clean hands, shape the chocolate dough into two 8-inch-long ropes. On a lightly floured surface, roll the plain dough into two 8- by 4-inch rectangles. Wrap each chocolate rope in plain dough (this makes a log with a chocolate center). Wrap the dough with plastic and chill it until firm, about 1 hour.
4. Heat the oven to 350°. Cut each dough log into ¾-inch slices. Arrange pairs of slices side by side on an ungreased cookie sheet, gently squeezing them together to create an owl face. Pinch the upper corners to form ears. Press chocolate chip eyes (tip down) and cashew beaks into the dough, as shown. Bake the cookies for 10 to 12 minutes. Leave them on the cookie sheet a couple of minutes before transferring them to a wire cooling rack, as they will be fragile when warm.

cracker sandwiches

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES | SERVES: 1

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Whipped cream cheese
- ☐ Assorted fresh vegetables (avoid vegetables like cucumbers that tend to get juicy when sliced)
- ☐ Sliced or cubed ham or turkey
- ☐ Crackers

1. Pack the cream cheese in a small sealable plastic container (don't forget to include a plastic knife or craft stick for spreading).
2. Arrange the veggies and meat in another container. Pack the crackers separately as well.
3. Your child needs only to pop open the containers and assemble her cracker creations.



craft a can't-miss reminder

Make a changeable reminder clip like the one shown by gluing a pad of **mini sticky notes** to a **clothespin**. Then you can tear off sheets and switch the "don't forget" message from day to day.



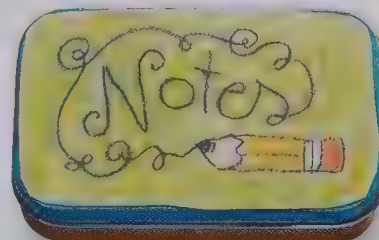
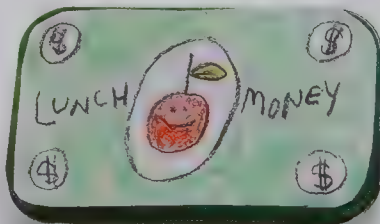
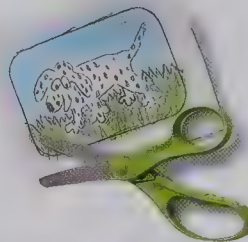
carry-all tins

Need a handy place to stash lunch money, notes, or other small but important items? These personalized tins are just the thing.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Small, empty metal box (we used Altoids mint boxes)
- ☐ Paper
- ☐ Colored pencils or markers
- ☐ Scissors
- ☐ Glue

Trace the top of the tin onto the paper, then draw and color a design on the paper. Cut out the shape and glue the drawing to the tin top. Now fill the tin with all those very important things.



shape-up lunchtime fare

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Stamping cheese or deli slices into shapes is a whimsical way to dress up a dull lunch, one that might even coax your child into eating more of her meal. We like **mini alphabet fondant cutters** (Wilton, \$16 for a set) for sending short, sweet messages atop salads, pastas, or soups. You may need a toothpick to pry some pieces from the cutters, but the result is worth the effort.



spiff up sandwiches

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Make your next PB & J a cut above the rest by using **Puzzle Bites Crustless Sandwich Cutter** (Mom Invented, \$4), a slicer that trims away crusts and turns your child's sandwich into an edible puzzle.

serve lunch on a stick

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Eating fruit, cheese, or deli meat on a stick is far more fun than eating it out of a plain old plastic bag. These **mini bamboo skewers** (pickonus.com, \$10 for 100-200) are topped with everything from diamonds to dolphins.



dip into something different

Switch your child's usual sandwich for one of these delicious lunch dips.



APRICOT YOGURT DIP

In a small bowl, stir together $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **apricot jam** or fruit spread, 6 tablespoons **nonfat plain yogurt**, and 1 teaspoon **Dijon mustard** until well blended. Pack the dip with cubes of turkey, ham, chicken, or cheese on mini skewers. Makes $\frac{3}{4}$ cup.

VERY VEGGIE DIP

In a food processor, pulse 8 ounces of softened **cream cheese** until smooth. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon each **garlic powder** and **onion powder**, $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon **salt**, and 1 tablespoon **fresh dill** (optional), and pulse again until blended. Slice the greens of two **scallions** and peel and coarsely grate a small **carrot**. Add the vegetables and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup **nonfat plain yogurt** to the processor and pulse the mixture until smooth. Pack the dip with your child's favorite raw vegetables. Makes $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups.

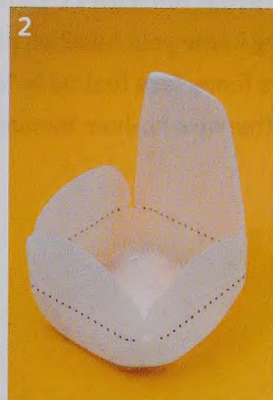


say bye-bye to plastic bags

With just a few snips, you can create a set of cool, ecofriendly, reusable snack and sandwich containers from juice cartons and milk jugs. They're food-safe, easy to rinse clean, and absolutely free, so it's no biggie if they get tossed accidentally. Let your kids decorate the boxes with stickers and permanent markers for an even more creative, personalized look.

SANDWICH BOX

Mark an empty, clean **1-gallon milk jug** as shown (1), then cut along the lines with **scissors**. To make the crease lines, use a **thumbtack** to pierce a row of dots at $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch intervals across each side of the jug, $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches up from the bottom (2). Fold the flaps at these dotted lines, then open them and fold them in the opposite direction along the lines (this will make the flaps easier for your kids to open and close). Fold up the box and add an adhesive-backed **Velcro dot** closure (3).



SNACK BOX

Use an empty, clean **juice or milk carton** in any size from a halfpint to a quart. Cut off the top, then cut the sides into flaps as shown. Carefully crease the flaps, then fold them down and add an adhesive-backed **Velcro dot** closure.



doodle on a bagel

For a lunch box note that'll really make an impression, draw pictures and write messages directly on your kid's sandwich or piece of fruit with **edible food markers**. Use the markers (we like Wilton Food Writers, \$8 for a pack of five colors) to send midday reminders ("Don't forget to bring home your baseball mitt!") or to make a funny face that adds "a-peel" to that otherwise ho-hum banana.



make a deal

Here's a nifty way to encourage older kids to help in lunch prep—and learn the value of money. Offer to give your child \$15 a week to either buy lunch at school and pay for it himself, or pack it at home and pocket the money. You may find your frugal child choosing to prepare lunch if he likes the extra money. One happy mom tried this and reports that her child "was always in the recipe books looking for things she could make, and by the time she was in high school she was making our dinners."



Cooking
with Kids



EASY KIDS' LUNCHES

Simple sandwiches, creative snacks, sweet treats, and lunch box tips! These great ideas from *FamilyFun* magazine make lunchtime even more fun for families. Be inspired with lots of easy-to-prepare recipes kids love to help make, eat, and share.



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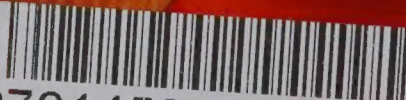


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